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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5775  
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
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AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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CINCSO FOR INTAFF, CINCLANT FOR POLAD, ROME ALSO FOR VATICAN

EO 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PROP, PEPR, PORG, ASEC, AR, FR, GW, IT, SP, SW,  
UK, US, UY

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN ARGENTINA

REF: A) BUENOS AIRES 6297 (NOTAL); B) MONTEVIDEO 4604 (NOTAL);  
C) BUENOS AIRES 6248 (NOTAL)

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: AS INDICATED IN THE DRAFT ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS  
REPORT (REFTEL C), PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVANCE HAS BEEN  
SIGNIFICANT, THE POLITICAL OPENING BEING A MAJOR FACTOR. AT THE  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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SAME TIME, GREATER FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND SPEECH, AND THE PRO-  
MOISE OF ELECTIONS, HAVE ENCOURAGED HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, JOURN-

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ALISTS, AND OTHERS WHO SUPPORT THEM TO BRING HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES OUT OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL BACKSTAGE AND INTO THE SPOTLIGHT. AS A RESULT, HUMAN RIGHTS HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE, AND THE PROBLEM OF ACCOUNTING FOR THE DISAPPEARED IS AFFECTING ARGENTINA'S RELATIONS WITH SEVERAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. IN SUM, ALTHOUGH NEW VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA ARE RELATIVELY FEW, DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND ARGENTINA'S DOMESTIC POLITICS OR FOREIGN RELATIONS ARE BECOMING MORE FREQUENT. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO PROVIDE A ROUND-UP OF RECENT HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS.

2. [REDACTED] THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT IS A SPEECH GIVEN BY THE ARMY'S CHIEF OF STAFF IN WHICH HE ACCUSED HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS OF ABETTING "SUBVERSION". THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS THE GROWING NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS THAT ARE PRESSURING ARGENTINA TO ACCOUNT FOR PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEARED. MEANWHILE THE SUPREME COURT HAS ORDERED INVESTIGATIONS INTO A MORGUE WHICH ALLEGEDLY CARRIED OUT ILLEGAL AUTOPSIES AND BURIALS. THE HIGH COURT HAS ALSO ORDERED A JUDGE INVESTIGATED FOR ALLEGEDLY CONDONING TORTURE. BANNED WEEKLY MAGAZINE MAY BE ALLOWED TO RE-OPEN. GOA RELEASES MORE PEN PRISONERS. AMBASSADOR RECEIVES MOTHERS OF DISAPPEARED. END SUMMARY.

3. (U) CALVI'S SPEECH

THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, MAJOR GENERAL EDGARDO CALVI, ON NOVEMBER 17 ACCUSED HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS OF FINANCING "STATEMENTS AND TRIPS BY THE MOTHERS OF TERRORISTS", IN AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO. CALVI ADDED THAT SUBVERSION WAS "ATTEMPTING TO PENETRATE THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENTS TO SAP THE POWER OF THE STATE, TRYING TO REACH THAT POWER THROUGH CHAOS AND TERROR". HE ALSO SAID THAT SUCH SUBVER-

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ION "DISGUISES ITSELF BEHIND THE ORGANIZATIONS DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR PEACE AND SOLIDARITY."

. [REDACTED] COMMENT: MOST SENIOR ARGENTINE OFFICERS CLAIM TO BELIEVE THAT THE "MOTHERS" AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS ARE AIDING AND ABETTING SUBVERSION. CALVI IS THE FIRST RANKING OFFICER TO SAY SO PUBLICLY IN A LONG WHILE, PROBABLY BECAUSE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS SEEM TO BE SUCCESSFUL LATELY IN MOBILIZING DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR AN ACCOUNTING FOR PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEARED. IT MAY ALSO BE THE BEGINNING OF A CAMPAIGN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA (GOA) TO MAKE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT AN INCREASE IN TERRORISM IS IMMINENT AND TO LINK HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS

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TO TERRORISTS. END COMMENT.

5. (U) INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR INVESTIGATIONS. OFFICIAL REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ON PERSONS WHO DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA HAVE BEEN MADE IN RECENT WEEKS BY AT LEAST FIVE EMBASSIES IN BUENOS AIRES (FRENCH, GERMAN, ITALIAN, SPANISH AND SWEDISH). THE ITALIAN UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS WAS QUOTED AS SAYING ON NOVEMBER THAT ARGENTINA WAS HOLDING 128 POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO EITHER ARE ITALIAN PASSPORT HOLDERS OR ARE ENTITLED TO ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP. AN ITALIAN DIPLOMAT FROM ROME MADE A FIVE-DAY VISIT TO ARGENTINA NOVEMBER 10-15 TO GATHER INFORMATION ON THE FATE OF 300 MISSING PEOPLE OF ITALIAN ORIGIN. THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT IS CONSIDERING SENDING A DELEGATION OF MP'S TO ARGENTINA ON A FACT-FINDING MISSION TO LOOK INTO THE CONDITIONS OF "THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY" (A BIG JOB SINCE APPROXIMATELY 40 PERCENT OF ARGENTINA'S POPULATION IS OF ITALIAN ORIGIN) AND THE PROBLEM OF DISAPPEARANCES (SEE ROME 26550 AND BA 6690, BOTH NOTAL). UNNAMED DIPLOMATIC SOURCES IN BA WERE QUOTED AS SAYING THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND ITALY WERE AT THEIR LOWEST EBB EVER.

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ON NOVEMBER 18 THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT APPEALED TO THE UN TO INVESTIGATE DISAPPEARANCES IN ARGENTINA, JOINING AN EARLIER CALL BY ITALY. THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT'S PROPOSAL ALSO URGED THE PRESIDENTS OF THE TEN NATIONS COMPRISING THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY TO EXERT PRESSURE ON THE GOA TO FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS.

6. (U) ARGENTINA'S REPLY

WHILE THE GOA HAS NOT REPLIED PUBLICLY TO ANY OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED CALLS, ITS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE SAID IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH AN ARGENTINE RADIO STATION ON NOVEMBER 9 THAT THE EUROPEAN REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEARED SPRANG FROM "PRESSURE" FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, WHICH TRIED TO TIP INTERNATIONAL OPINION AGAINST ARGENTINA WHEN THE UN

[REDACTED]

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WAS DISCUSSING THE FALKLAND/MALVINAS ISLANDS ISSUE NOVEMBER 2-4.

7. [REDACTED] COMMENT: ONE GOA FOREIGN OFFICE CONTACT WHO WORKS ON HUMAN RIGHTS TOLD US THAT HIS PERSONAL OPINION COINCIDED EXACTLY WITH THAT OF THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. OTHER ARGENTINE OFFICIALS HAVE ALSO TOLD US THEY SUSPECT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD AT LEAST A HAND IN THE TIMING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR INVESTIGATIONS. END COMMENT.

8. (U) MOTHERS OF URUGUAYANS PRESS THEIR CASES.

A UP STORY SAID THAT THE MOTHERS OF URUGUAYANS WHO DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA ANNOUNCED ON NOVEMBER 18 THAT URUGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTER CARLOS MAESO HAD PROMISED TO MEET THEM AFTER NOVEMBER 25. THE MOTHERS HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN DEMANDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF URUGUAY INTERCEDE ON BEHALF OF THEIR SONS WHO DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA (REFTEL B).

9. (U) GRANDMOTHERS PUSH FOR SUPPORT IN WASHINGTON.

A PRESS REPORT FROM WASHINGTON SAID THAT ON NOVEMBER 17 TWO LEADERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF GRANDMOTHERS OF THE PALZA DE MAYO ASKED THAT THE US GOVERNMENT AND THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAN STATES INVESTIGATE THE WHEREABOUTS OF 110 CHILDREN WHO PURPORTEDLY DISAPPEARED IN ARGENTINA DURING THE WAR AGAINST SUBVERSION. THE TWO REPORTEDLY TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THEY HAD "BEEN GIVEN ASSURANCES BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE OAS THAT DIPLOMATIC ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN."

10. (U) COMMENT: IF THE GRANDMOTHERS CALLED AT THE DEPARTMENT,

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WE WOULD APPRECIATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE VISIT. END COMMENT.

11. (U) MORE CEMETERY PROBES ASKED.  
RELATIVES OF PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEARED HAVE ASKED FOR JUDICIAL  
INQUIRIES INTO MORE UNMARKED GRAVES. EIGHT GRAVEYARDS IN  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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THE BUENOS AIRES AREA AND SEVERAL IN OTHER CITIES, INCLUDING  
CORDOBA, MAR DEL PLATA, AND NECOCHEA, ARE NOW UNDER INVESTIGA-  
TION BY THE JUDICIARY, ACCORDING TO THE CENTRE FOR LEGAL AND  
SOCIAL STUDIES (CELS). CELS CLAIMS THAT THE EIGHT CEMETERIES IN  
THE BUENOS AIRES AREA CONTAIN AN ESTIMATED 1,500 UNMARKED  
GRAVES, MANY OF WHICH CELS BELIEVES CONTAIN THE REMAINS OF PEOPLE  
KILLED SECRETLY BY SECURITY FORCES DURING THE 1970S.

12. (U) SUPREME COURT TO PROBE MORGUE.  
IN MID-NOVEMBER THE SUPREME COURT DECIDED TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGA-  
TIONS THAT THE COURT MORGUE ILLEGALLY CARRIED OUT AUTOPSIES,  
OBTAINED DEATH CERTIFICATES, AND ORDERED THE BURIAL OF PERSONS  
KILLED BY SECURITY FORCES IN 1976, WITHOUT INFORMING THE APPRO-  
PRIATE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES.

13. (U) SUPREME COURT ORDERS JUDGE INVESTIGATED FOR ALLEGEDLY  
CONDONING TORTURE.  
THE SUPREME COURT ON NOVEMBER 12 ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION INTO  
JUDGE DAMIANOVICH DE CERREDO'S CONDUCT IN CONNECTION WITH ALLEGA-  
TIONS THAT S OQUJKV (#)  
JOURNALIST IN AN  
ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY "LA PRENSA" IN OCTOBER. JUDGE  
DAMIANOVICH HAS BEEN PLACED ON LEAVE UNTIL HER TRIAL IN JANUARY.

14. (U) MEMO DETAILING GOA CENSORSHIP LEAKED.  
THE PUBLIC INFORMATION SECRETARIAT, WHICH OPERATES UNDER THE  
JURISDICTION OF THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, REPORTEDLY SENT A  
MEMORANDUM TO THE FEDERAL BROADCASTING COMMISSION THAT WAS LEAKED  
TO THE PRESS AND PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 9. THE MEMO WAS LABELED "CON-  
FIDENTIAL". IT PROHIBITED STATE-RUN MEDIA (I.E., ALL TELEVISION  
STATIONS AND MOST RADIO STATIONS) FROM BROADCASTING REPORTS ON  
'ISSUES RELATED TO SUBVERSIVE ACTS.' AMONG THE LIST OF ISSUES ARE  
'ORGANIZATIONS WHICH SUPPORT 'SUBVERSION' SUCH AS THE MOTHERS  
OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO; HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS AND OTHERS; COURT PRO-  
CEEDINGS RELATED TO THESE ACTS; JOURNALISTIC COMMENTARY ON THIS  
ISSUE; ANY OTHER ASPECT RELATED TO THIS SUBJECT".  
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NOTE BY OC/T: BUENOS AIRES 6732 SEC 2/3 PARA 13 (#) PORTIONS GARBLED.  
CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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15. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL GOA REACTION TO THE  
LEAK TO DATE. MEDIA CONTACTS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THEY DID RECEIVE  
THE MEMO. THEY ALSO TELL US THAT HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE INSTRU-  
CTIONS HAS BEEN LEFT TO THE INDIVIDUAL STATIONS. THE RESULT HAS  
BEEN A VERY UNEVEN IMPLEMENTATION. THE FINAL DECISION ON WHAT TO  
EXCISE HAS USUALLY BEEN MADE BY A STATION MANAGER, SOMETIMES BY  
A BROADCASTER, WITH EACH PERSON HAVING HIS OWN INTERPRETATION  
OF THE MEMO. IT PROBABLY DOES NOT MATTER MUCH ANYWAY, BECAUSE  
IN THE WAKE OF THE ARGENTINE  
DEBACLE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC THE STATE-RUN MEDIA NOW  
HAVE ALMOST NO CREDIBILITY. ONE TATEVISION PROGRAM WHOSE

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NAME IS "THE HOUR OF TRUTH" IS CALLED "THE HOUR OF LIES"  
BY THE GENRAL PUBLIC. END COMMENT.  
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16. [REDACTED] JOURNALISTS THREATENED AND HARASSED.  
AMERICAN, ARGENTINE AND FRENCH JOURNALISTS REPORTED  
INSTANCES OF HARASSMENT IN EARLY NOVEMBER RANGING FROM  
ANONYMOUS THREATENING PHONE CALLS TO BEING DETAINED  
AT THE AIRPORT BEFORE DEPARTURE. THE TWO AMERICANS,  
MARTIN ANDERSON OF NEWSWEEK AND ED SCHUMACHER OF THE  
NEW YORK TIMES, INFORMED THE EMBASSY IN MID-NOVEMBER  
THAT THE HARASSMENT HAD CEASED.

17. (U) POLICE RAID PROVINCIAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE  
RADICAL PARTY. TUCUMAN PROVINCIAL POLICE ON NOVEMBER 10  
MADE AN UNAUTHORIZED RAID ON THE RADICAL PARTY'S PRO-  
VINCIAL HEADQUARTERS. EYE WITNESSES REPORTED THAT  
POLICE SURROUNDED THE HEADQUARTERS, CUT OFF ALL TRAFFIC,  
BROKE INTO THE BUILDING, THREATENED OCCUPANTS WITH FIRE-  
ARMS, SEARCHED THROUGH DOCUMENTS IN THE OFFICE, AND TOOK  
DOWN THE NAMES OF THOSE ON THE PREMISES. RADICAL PARTY  
LEADERS SAID THE INTRUDERS WERE EVIDENTLY LOOKING FOR  
DOCUMENTS CONNECTED WITH THE VISIT OF NOBEL PEACE PRIZE  
WINNER ADOLFO PEREZ ESQUIVEL, WHO ARRIVED THE FOLLOWING  
DAY (11TH). AT FIRST THE LOCAL POLICE CHIEF DENIED ANY  
POLICE RESPONSIBILITY. SUBSEQUENTLY, UNIDENTIFIED POLICE  
SOURCES ADMITTED THAT OFFICIAL FORCES HAD "ACTED BEYOND  
THE LIMITS OF THEIR FUNCTIONS." THE TUCUMAN POLICE CHIEF  
SUBMITTED A FULL REPORT TO THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR, WHO  
ANNOUNCED ON NOVEMBER 23 THAT "SOME POLICEMAN HAD BEEN  
REPRIMANDED."

18. [REDACTED] COMMENT: UNTIL THE LIFTING OF THE BAN ON POLITI-  
CAL PARTY ACTIVITY LAST JULY, SEARCHES OF PARTY HEAD-  
QUARTERS WERE COMMONPLACE. THIS IS THE FIRST SUCH  
INCIDENT WE ARE AWARE OF SINCE THE JULY EDICT, AND THE  
[REDACTED]  
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FACT THAT THERE WERE REPRIMANDS, AND THAT SUCH AN  
UNAUTHORIZED RAID IS CONSIDERED AN OUTRAGE, IS SIGNIFI-  
CANT PROGRESS. END COMMENT.

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19. (U) IN NOVEMBER 23 AN APPEALS COURT CONFIRMED A LOWER COURT DECISION NULLIFYING THE GOA DECREE WHICH CLOSED "LA SEMANA" MAGAZINE (BA 6251). THE GOA APPARENTLY HAS NOT YET DECIDED TO APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT.

20. PEN PRISONERS RELEASES: ON NOVEMBER 23, THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (MOI), ANNOUNCED THE RELEASE INTO PAROLE STATUS (LIBERTAD VIGILADA) OF 84 PEN PRISONERS AND THE LIFTING OF ALL RESTRICTIONS ON 43 OTHERS WHO HAD BEEN IN PAROLE STATUS. THE MOI COMMUNIQUE ADDED THAT THIS IS PART OF A PROGRAM OF MONTHLY RELEASES OF PEN DETAINEES WHICH THE GOA INTENDS TO CARRY OUT UNTIL ALL ARE FREE BY THE TIME THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT ASSUMES OFFICE. WE WILL REVIEW THE LIST AND INFORM CONGRESSMEN OF ANY RELEASES INVOLVING CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST. WE WILL ALSO BE FORWARDING TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT NEW FIGURES ON PEN PRISONERS, ADJUSTED FOR THESE RELEASES AND OTHERS WHICH OCCURED IN OCTOBER.

21. MOTHERS OF DISAPPEARED: ON NOVEMBER 23 SIX MOTHERS OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS CALL ON THE AMBASSADOR, AS THEY DO FROM TIME TO TIME, TO URGE THE US GOVERNMENT TO PRESS THE GOA FOR AN ACCOUNTING FOR THE DISAPPEARED.  
SHLAUDEMAN  
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